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Four Who Didn't Return

Thomas Willard Ray, a 30-year-old pilot who worked as an inspector for Hayes International Corp., Birmingham, Ala., aircraft servicing firm with government contracts, called his wife one day in the winter of 1960-61 to say mysteriously that he was taking an assignment "up north." Ten days before the mid-April Bay of Pigs invasion, he came home to Birmingham with a deep suntan, but his wife Margaret didn't ask why. She was sure it was classified.

Riley W. Shamburger Jr., 36, a major in the Alabama Air National Guard and a Hayes test pilot, also took a mysterious job that winter. But he came home to Birmingham every week to see his wife, June Wade Carroll Gray, 33, who had worked for Hayes as an electronics technician, told his wife, Violet,

"I used to see him twice

that he was going to Texas to work

on aircraft and tell them. But she never heard from him again."

A former Air Force technical sergeant, flight engineer, Leo J. Baker, 35, also worked for Hayes. His wife, Catherine, was expecting a baby when he left home, but he didn't tell her where he was going or why. When the baby was born in May 1961, Catherine said, "They knew what they were getting into, but I didn't. The last time Leo came home was about two weeks before Easter, but he sent me flowers for Easter Sunday."

Engine Failures The bad news came to all four next of kin in May 1961 from Alex Carlson, a Florida lawyer representing Double Check Corp., a Miami firm that had recruited the fliers. The four men, according to him, died when a C-46 cargo plane from Central America piloted by Stomper Moore went down in the Caribbean because of engine failure during the anti-Castro

sault on the Bay of Pigs beachhead.

Last week, prodded by Republican charges that four unnamed Americans had died in the Bay of Pigs disaster, the Administration's Senate Leader, Mike Mansfield, confirmed for the first time that Americans—civilians, not military men—had indeed died in the invasion. "It is known," he said, "that a few experienced American airmen were employed to train Cuban pilots, navigators, and radio operators. Because of the exhaustion of Cuban pilots, several of these Americans volunteered to fly combat missions . . . Several planes were attacked and four of these Americans lost their lives."

Grief Still without official notification, the widows now were all but sure their husbands were dead, not because of "engine fail-



Shamburger



Ray



Gray



Baker

ure," but from gunfire. This was confirmed in an article by Albert C. Persons, managing editor of the weekly *Examiner* of Birmingham, who participated in the invasion. "The four American fliers who lost their lives," wrote Persons without identifying them, "were part of an eight-strong contingent of military-trained combat-experienced airmen . . . They were hired to replace inexperienced Cuban air crews for the all-important initial air strikes against vital military targets prior to the actual landing . . ." At first, plans to use the Americans were succeeded by operational headquarter in Nicaragua, Persons said. But if the invasion bogged down and the air strikes by Cuban pilots had gotten nowhere, he added, American volunteers were accepted for an additional third strike in B-26 jet bombers. Beyond that, just how the four died was still as much